

Liturgy

What do the parts of the liturgy mean? This is a frequently asked question; maybe you have asked that question yourself. The following descriptions of worship and the parts of liturgy were first published in an article by the former Commission on Worship for the Reporter Insert entitled "Taking a Tour of Heaven."

“ Worship is like no place else in this world.

But there is one place that it does resemble, and that is heaven ”

The story is told of how Christianity was introduced to Russia. More than 1,000 years ago Grand Duke Vladimir of Kiev was interested in selecting an appropriate religion for his new nation. His emissaries investigated the main religions of the day, including Roman Catholicism and Islam. But it was only after visiting the chief site of the Orthodox Church in Constantinople that they found what they were looking for. In their report to their duke, the emissaries noted that in Orthodox worship there was such solemn splendor that they had a hard time knowing whether they were in heaven or on earth.





Worship is like that: one foot in heaven with the other here on earth. What brings heaven into our earthly worship is not dependent on the elaborateness of the service or the sincerity of our devotion. Rather, it is because of the One who is present in our worship that we experience heaven on earth.

If worship is "heaven on earth," then it stands to reason that what we do and say in worship should in some sense give us a foretaste of that great feast to come. In the following tour of the Divine Service we will see how the ancient texts of the liturgy give us that glimpse of heaven and, more importantly, how they deliver to us, here and now, the eternal benefits of forgiveness, life, and salvation.

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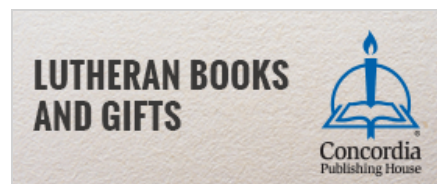
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